

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently amended) A harvesting apparatus ~~Harvesting equipment~~
(1) for harvesting ~~corn or other such~~ stalked plants, ~~the harvesting equipment~~
comprising at least one circulating endless conveyor (10; 1) ~~for gathered plants,~~
~~which has at the end~~ which leads cut stalks to a delivery area [(14)] at an end of a
working strand thereof for delivering [[the]] harvested plants to an inlet opening of
a further processing apparatus, ~~especially a chopper~~, the endless conveyor comprising
conveyor links (25; 26) articulated to one another, ~~and at least one lower cutting~~
~~plane (A) comprising outwardly pointing cutting means and at least one holding~~
~~plane (B; C) above it comprising outwardly pointing holding means for holding the~~
~~cut stalks, wherein~~ said conveyor links including outwardly pointing cutting means
disposed on at least one cutting plane and outwardly pointing cut stalk holding means
for holding the cut stalks disposed on at least one holding plane which is disposed
above said at least one cutting plane, a front side (77; 78) a forward portion of each
of the ~~endless conveyor (10; 11)~~ links which faces outwardly in a direction of facing
the cutting means and the cut stalk holding means, and which collectively comprises
a front side of the endless conveyor, being structurally configured such that the front

side of the endless conveyor is made to be substantially closed to an opposed side thereto.

A 2. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said at least one holding plane includes the endless conveyor (10; 11) has a lower cutting plane (A) and above it two upper and lower holding planes (B; C) provided with both being located above said cutting plane, on which respective first and second cut stalk holding means for holding the stalks are disposed.

3. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of ~~the claims 1 or claim~~ 2, wherein the first cut stalk holding means (53; 54) of the upper holding plane [[C]] are offset against [[the]] a line of travel [[F]] from the second cut stalk holding means (51; 52) of the lower holding plane [[B]] in [[the]] an area of the working strand of the endless conveyor (10; 11).

4. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the conveyor links (25; 26) of the endless conveyor (10; 11) are made each ~~in one piece or from parts permanently joined to one another~~ in integral form, one of in one piece and from parts permanently joined.

5. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of ~~claims 1 or 2~~ the claims 1 to 4, wherein, ~~to form the closed~~ a front face of each ~~particular of the~~ conveyor link ~~(25, 26)~~, links is substantially closed by a first deflecting shield ~~(41) forming a component of the conveyor link (25, 26) is provided~~ extending between the cutting plane ~~[[A]]~~ and the ~~[[first]]~~ lower holding plane ~~[[B]]~~ and a second deflecting shield ~~(47) is provided~~ extending between the ~~first~~ [[B]] and the ~~second (C)~~ lower holding plane and the upper holding plane.

6. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 5, wherein the deflection shields ~~(41, 47)~~ extend between joint axes ~~(60, 61)~~ of the ~~particular~~ conveyor links.

7. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim ~~one of the claims 5 or 6~~, wherein the deflection shields ~~(41, 47)~~ have a bulging shape and the deflection shields ~~(41, 47)~~ of adjacent ones of the conveyor links ~~(25, 26)~~ form, in the delivery area ~~(14)~~, in which a turnabout of the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~ takes place, a substantially continuous, kink-free curved path.

8. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the claims 1 to 7~~, further comprising wherein the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~ is held in a frame~~[[,]]~~ including a cutting knife carried thereon, ~~(34) being~~

~~associated with the frame and the~~ said endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~ being held by said frame and movable relative thereto.

9. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 8, wherein the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~ ~~has in its cutting plane~~ includes a lower driver ~~(32, 33)~~, at said cutting plane which cooperates with the cutting knife ~~[(34)]~~ as a counter-knife.

10. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the claims 1 to 9~~, wherein, ~~with the closed front surface of the endless conveyor (10, 11), there is associated~~ further comprising at least one stripper cooperative with the front side of the endless conveyor ~~(42, 48)~~, and with respect to which, the endless conveyor is relatively movable.

11. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10, wherein the at least one stripper ~~or strippers (42, 48)~~ are ~~is~~ disposed in the delivery area ~~[(14)]~~ of the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~.

12. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 or 11~~, wherein the at least one stripper ~~or strippers (42, 48)~~ are ~~is~~ configured as a substantially rigid ~~bodies~~ body standing on edge, ~~which are~~

each said at least one stripper being disposed in each case between at least one adjacent vertical pair of the at least one cutting plane and the at least one cut stalk holding plane two cutting and/or holding plates (A, B, C) of the endless conveyor.

13. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 to 12~~, wherein the at least one ~~stripper or strippers (42, 48)~~ sweep sweeps substantially completely ~~[[the]]~~ at least one of a distance between ~~[[a]]~~ the cutting plane ~~[[A]]~~ and a holding plane ~~(B)~~ and/or and another distance between ~~[[two]]~~ an adjacent pair of cut stalk holding planes comprised of the at least one holding plane planes (B, C).

14. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 to 13~~, wherein the at least one ~~stripper (42, 48)~~ is held in the delivery ~~area of the delivery (14)~~ and extends forward with ~~[[its]]~~ a free end thereof substantially in ~~[[the]]~~ a line of travel and reaches into ~~[[the]]~~ a curved turnaround area of the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~.

15. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 14, wherein the at least one stripper is ~~strippers (42, 48) are~~ disposed on both sides of ~~[[an]]~~ the inlet opening to ~~[[a]]~~ the further processing apparatus and ~~[[form]]~~ forms a lateral guiding surfaces surface for the plants cut stalks.

16. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 to 15~~, wherein the at least one stripper ~~strippers (42, 48)~~ are ~~is~~ combined in one component for cooperation with two superimposed deflection shields (41, 47).

17. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 to 16~~, wherein the at least one stripper is comprised ~~strippers (42, 48)~~ consist of spring steel.

18. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 10 ~~one of the claims 10 to 17~~, wherein the at least one stripper is ~~strippers are~~ yieldingly supported by spring mounting.

19. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the claims 1 to 18~~, wherein said at least one holding plane includes a first holding plane, ~~[[(B)]] of the endless conveyor is formed by the fact that each~~ conveyor link (10, 11) ~~has in the holding plane (B)~~ having at least ~~[[one]]~~ a first driver (51, 52); in said first holding plane which is part of a flat body ~~[[(45)]]~~ lying in ~~[[the]]~~ a conveying and guiding plane, the flat body ~~[[(45)]]~~ having at least one projection forming the at least first driver (51, 52), which projects outwardly across ~~[[the]]~~ a direction of rotation (U1, U2) of the endless conveyor (10, 11).

20. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 19 ~~one of the claims 1 to 19~~, wherein said at least one holding plane includes a second holding plane (C) of the endless conveyor (10, 11) is formed by the fact that each conveyor link (25, 26) has in the holding plane (C) at least [[one]] a second driver (53, 54) in said second holding plane which is part of [[a]] an other flat body [[(46)]] lying in the conveying and guiding plane, the other flat body [[(46)]] having at least one other projection forming the at least second driver[[,]] which projects outward outwardly across the direction of rotation (U1, U2) of the endless conveyor (10, 11).

21. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 20 ~~one of the claims 19 or 20~~, wherein [[a]] at least one of the flat body (45, 46) and the other flat body has two forwardly extending projections (51, 52, 53, 54).

22. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 21, wherein approximately equal intervals are formed between the projections (51, 52, 53, 54) of [[each]] said flat body (45, 46) and the projections (52, 51, 54, 53) of an adjacent flat body (45, 46) lying in [[the]] a same plane (B, C).

23. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 20 ~~one of the claims 19 to 22~~, wherein the flat bodies (45, 46) of the holding planes

~~(B, C)~~ body and the other flat body each have ~~[[each]]~~ two projections ~~(51, 52)~~ and ~~(53, 54)~~.

24. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim ~~20 one of the claims 19 to 23~~, wherein the projections ~~(51, 52)~~ of at least one of said first and second holding plane (45) planes are configured as flat bodies extended in a parallelogram-like manner.

25. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim ~~20 one of the claims 19 to 24~~, wherein the projections ~~(53, 54)~~ expand counter to ~~[[the]]~~ a line of travel ~~[[F]]~~ and thus ~~[[the]]~~ a distance ~~[[55]]~~ between the projections ~~(53, 54)~~ decreases in ~~[[the]]~~ an area of the working strand ~~[(18)]~~ counter to the line of travel ~~[[F]]~~.

26. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim ~~20 one of the claims 19 to 25~~, wherein, in ~~[[a]]~~ the lower holding plane ~~[(B)]~~, substantially parallelogram-shaped projections ~~(51, 52)~~ are formed and, in ~~[[an]]~~ the upper holding plane ~~[(C)]~~, triangular projections ~~(53, 54)~~ of the flat bodies ~~(45, 46)~~ are formed ~~and, on the one hand,~~ such that the cut stalks ~~[(3)]~~ can be held in ~~[[the]]~~ an acute angle ~~[(W)]~~ between the parallelogram-shaped projection ~~(51, 52)~~ and ~~[[the]]~~ a front edge ~~[(45a)]~~ of the flat body ~~[(45)]~~ and, ~~on the other,~~ in ~~[[the]]~~

another angle between the triangular projection ~~(53, 54)~~ and the front edge ~~[(46a)]~~ of the flat body ~~[(46)]~~ of the upper holding plane ~~[(C)]~~.

27. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 26, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a space ~~[(55)]~~ for the cut stalks ~~[(3)]~~, which is formed by the projections ~~(51, 52, 53, 54)~~ of the ~~[[said]]~~ upper and lower holding planes ~~(B, C)~~ acting as holding parts, narrows counter to the line of travel direction ~~(F)~~.

28. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 20 ~~one of the claims 19 to 27~~, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a front edge ~~(45a, 46a)~~ of the flat bodies ~~(45, 46)~~ is of substantially arcuate shape between the projections ~~(51, 52, 53, 54)~~.

29. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 20 ~~one of the claims 19 to 28~~, wherein the flat bodies ~~(45, 46)~~ have at one end, parallel to the direction of rotation ~~(U1, U2)~~, a substantially arcuate broadening ~~(64, 65)~~ and, at ~~[[the]]~~ an other end, a complementary recess ~~(68, 69)~~, the flat bodies ~~(45, 46)~~ of adjacent ones of the conveyor links ~~(25, 26)~~ engaging one another with slight clearance in the assembled state.

30. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the preceding claims~~, wherein a flat body ~~[[44]]~~ bearing ~~[[the]]~~ a driver ~~[[31]]~~ configured as a counter-knife has, parallel to ~~[[the]]~~ a direction of rotation ~~(U1, U2)~~ of the endless conveyor, an arcuate segment ~~(66, 67)~~ at one end and, at ~~[[the]]~~ an other end, a complementary recess ~~[[70]]~~, and adjacent flat bodies ~~[[44]]~~ mate with one another with slight free play.

A,

31. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the preceding claims~~, wherein a front face of each of the conveyor links is substantially closed by a first deflecting shield and includes a flat body lying in a conveying and guiding plane, a ~~[[the]]~~ curvature of the deflection shields ~~(41, 47)~~ as well as ~~[[the]]~~ a curvature of ~~[[the]]~~ a leading edge ~~(44a, 45a, 46a)~~ of the flat body ~~(44, 45, 46)~~ is configured arcuately ~~[[64]]~~.

32. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 28, wherein the radius of curvature of the arcuate shape is substantially the same as ~~[[the]]~~ a radius of one of an idle sprocket ~~[[or]]~~ and a drive sprocket disposed near the delivery area ~~[[14]]~~ of the endless conveyor ~~(10, 11)~~ at the processing apparatus.

33. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the claims 1 to 30~~, wherein each of the conveyor link (25; 26) links of the endless conveyor (10; 11) ~~can be composed~~ is comprised of two sections (37; 38) ~~and locked to one another, said two sections including upper and lower sections.~~

34. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claims 1 or 2 ~~one of the claims 1 to 33~~, wherein adjacent links of said conveyor links (25; 26) have a swiveling connection [[(73)]].

35. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 34, wherein the swiveling connection [[(73)]] between said adjacent links of said conveyor links (25; 26) ~~can be produced by~~ includes a pin (49) ~~associated with the~~ carried on the upper section [[(38)]] on a one of said adjacent links and a bearing [[(43)]] to receive the pin in the lower section [[(37)]] of an adjacent one of said adjacent conveyor link (25; 26) links.

36. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 35, wherein said bearing is one of a sealed rolling bearings bearing and a [[or]] grooved ball bearings ~~are provided as bearings (72)~~ bearing for the swiveling ~~connections (73)~~ connection.

37. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 36~~, wherein the arcuate segments (64; 66; 67) of the flat bodies (44; 45; 46) form a covering of the bearings (72).

38. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of claim 33 ~~one of the claims 33 to 37~~, wherein the sections (37; 38) of a conveyor link (25, 26) are bolted together.

39. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of claim 33 ~~one of the claims 33 to 38~~, wherein the upper section (38) comprises the flat bodies (45; 46) with the projections (51; 52; 53; 54) forming the holding planes and with the deflection shield (47) between them.

40. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of claim 33 ~~one of the claims 33 to 39~~, wherein the lower section (37) comprises the counter-knives (31), configured as drivers, and an additional deflection shield (41).

41. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 40~~, wherein the endless conveyor (10; ~~11~~) has projections on the conveyor links (25; ~~26~~) for engaging a drive.

42. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 41, wherein the projections are formed by ~~[[the]]~~ sleeve bodies ~~[[(43)]]~~ forming ~~[[the]]~~ a bearing.

A 43. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of claim 42, ~~wherein, to drive the endless conveyor (10; 11); further comprising~~ at least two sprockets lying opposite one another are provided, ~~which engage for driving the at least one endless conveyor, said at least two sprockets engaging the projections [[(43)]]~~ and ~~produce the effecting rotation of the conveyor links (25; 26) at least one endless conveyor.~~

44. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 43, wherein:

the endless conveyor includes a driving wheel ~~of the endless conveyor is associated with~~ at the delivery area; ~~[[(14)]]~~ and

a turning around of the endless conveyor ~~(10; 11)~~ takes place in the delivery area ~~of delivery (14)~~ to the further processing apparatus.

45. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2, wherein ~~the claims 1 to 44, wherein, in the area of the drive sprocket of the endless conveyor (10; 11);~~ said at least one conveyor includes additional

conveyors rotating about ~~[[the]]~~ a common axis of rotation ~~(12.1; 13.1)~~ can be mounted in an area of a drive sprocket.

46. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 45~~, wherein the conveyor links ~~(25; 26)~~ of the endless conveyor ~~(10; 11)~~ are guided in ~~their~~ a movement thereof between ~~[[the]]~~ driving and idle sprockets.

47. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 46~~, wherein the conveyor links ~~(25; 26)~~ are provided on their backs with an each includes engaging means ~~(29; 129)~~ provided on a back thereof aligned parallel to ~~[[the]]~~ a direction of rotation ~~(U1; U2)~~ of the endless conveyor and which are receivable into a corresponding recess ~~(30; 130)~~ of a guiding strip ~~(28; 128)~~.

48. (Currently amended) The harvesting equipment of claim 47, wherein the engaging means ~~(129)~~ is are formed by an upturned projection~~[[,]]~~ which ~~[[has]]~~ includes one of a sliding ~~[[or]]~~ and rolling bearing to guide ~~[[it]]~~ said upturned projection in the recess ~~(130)~~.

49. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 48~~, wherein said at least one endless conveyor includes two endless conveyors ~~(10, 11)~~ pointing laterally outward and lying essentially next to one another in ~~operation, are provided~~ operation.

50. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2 ~~the claims 1 to 49~~, wherein further comprising:

a frame on which the endless conveyor is held; and

leaf and plant lifters ~~[[(15)]]~~ carried on said ~~are assigned to each frame that bears the endless conveyor, and this said lifter comprises in each case comprising a~~ pyramid-shaped parting point ~~[[(16)]]~~.

51. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 50, ~~wherein, with~~ wherein each said parting point ~~(16)~~, includes a guiding hook ~~(17)~~ is associated, which comprises an arm pointing substantially in ~~[[the]]~~ a conveying direction ~~(U1, U2)~~.

52. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 51, wherein the arm extends up to an adjacent ~~the next~~ leaf and plant lifter ~~[[(15)]]~~.

53. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 51 ~~one of the claims 51 or 52~~, wherein the guiding hook ~~[(17)]~~ is resiliently mounted.

54. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 53, wherein ~~[(the)]~~ a spring force of the guiding ~~arm~~ ~~(17)~~ hook is put under tension against ~~[(the)]~~ a line of travel ~~[(F)]~~ so as to form a channel between the guiding ~~arm~~ ~~(17)~~ and the working strand ~~[(18)]~~ of the endless conveyor ~~(10; 11)~~ to carry the stalked plants ~~[(3)]~~ counter to the line of travel ~~[(F)]~~.

55. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2, further comprising the claims 1 to 54, wherein movable cutting knives ~~(112; 113)~~, separate from the endless conveyors, which are disposed underneath the endless conveyor.

56. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 55, wherein the movable cutting knives ~~(112; 113)~~ are configured as revolving disks and are disposed in a plane situated directly under ~~[(the)]~~ a plane of movement of the endless conveyor and parallel to ~~[(its)]~~ a path of movement thereof.

57. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 56, wherein the working strand of the endless conveyors ~~sweep with their working strand sweeps~~ over a transport area running transversely across ~~[[the]]~~ a line of travel ~~[[F]]~~ and the ~~revolving moving cutting~~ knives (112; 113) configured as revolving disks are arranged side by side and staggered underneath ~~[[this]]~~ said transport area.

58. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of ~~one of the claims~~ claim 55 to 57, wherein the ~~conveyor links have in a lower plane cutting means cooperating~~ cooperate with the ~~revolving moving cutting~~ knives (112; 113).

59. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 55 ~~one of the claims 55 to 57~~, wherein the ~~revolving moving cutting~~ knives (112; 113) freely sever the ~~stalks (3)~~ stalked plants.

60. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 55 ~~one of the claims 55 to 59~~, wherein the ~~revolving moving cutting~~ knives (112; 113) are fixedly journaled with respect to the frame (110; 111) holding the endless conveyors (10; 11).

61. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim 60, wherein the ~~revolving~~ moving cutting knives ~~(112; 113)~~ are configured as revolving disks which run in two planes and which overlap one another.

62. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of one of claims 1 or 2, the claims 1 to 61, wherein further comprising a fixed counter-knife in the delivery area of transfer (14) there is provided a fixed counter-knife (132); under which ~~[[the]]~~ a driver (31) of which is located at said at least one cutting plane ~~[[A]]~~ closely passes and over which an additional driver [(131)] situated above and parallel to the driver [(31)] closely passes.

63. (Currently amended) The harvesting ~~equipment~~ apparatus of claim ~~[[61]]~~ 62, wherein a front face of each of the conveyor links is substantially closed by at least one deflecting shield, and the upper additional driver [(131)] is affixed to the conveyor links (25; 26) of the endless conveyor conveyors (10; 11) by means of projections [(133)] fastened on [[the]] a back thereof and reaching through the at least one deflection shield [(41)].
